

Rescue Rue to Have World Premiere at The New York Children's Theater Festival

Heartwarming story inspired by playwright's own shelter dog, April 25 to 27

New York, NY, March 28, 2014 -- *Rescue Rue*, a heartwarming musical fairytale with puppets, will have its world premiere at **The New York Children's Theater Festival** April 25, 2014 with four performances (April 25, 5:30 PM; April 26, 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM; April 27, 2:00 PM). Stacey Weingarten wrote the play and is the director of the production, which tells the story of one dog's journey from shelter to adoption, finding a fur-ever home in NYC.

According to **The New York Children's Theater Festival** co-founder Chelsey Shannon, "I loved the sweet story and hilarious characters. I am also the owner of an adopted dog and related to the message of how important it is to give these animals a chance. It is a fun way of introducing this topic to young audiences and mixing in colorful puppets and catchy music makes it fun for the whole family."

Michael Shawn Lewis, co-founder of The Festival added, "Because of my own history with pet adoptions and knowing how much it can positively impact a home, this piece really hit a chord with me. I love the different characters and the heart of the story. When a person rescues a true pet friend, who is really rescuing who?"

The stars of *Rescue Rue* are: Sarah Haines (Narrator/Alex); Lisa Helmi Johanson (Rue); Aymee Garcia (Dogmother); Stacia Newcomb (Squish); Nate Begle (Prissy/Others); Brendan Malafronte (Artemis/Others); Jason Jacoby (Apollo/Others); Michelle Geisler (Sara the Rescuer/Others); and Michael Hull (Eric the Pound Worker/Others). Music and lyrics are by Kate Steinberg and Joshua Zecher-Ross.

Weingarten, who is also currently working as the puppet wrangler and wardrobe head on the Off-Broadway hit musical *Avenue Q* and teaches puppetry at Pace University, wrote *Rescue Rue* from her own experience adopting her dog Rue from a Brooklyn animal rescue group.

Weingarten explains, "The idea for *Rescue Rue* came when I wondered where my dog came from. When I adopted her, there was very little information about her history. The most I could gather was that she got picked up off a street in West Virginia severely underweight, brought into a high-kill shelter, and had fleas. From there she was rescued by a rescue group in Brooklyn, which is how I met her. I didn't know much about Rue at first and couldn't help but wonder how she ended up homeless in the first place. Was she a street dog? How could such a sweet thing have been lost and never found again? I would go to the ends of the earth to find her if she got lost. And I started writing what I imagined her story to be, when I realized that she must have had a Fairy Dogmother that guided her to me."

Rescue Rue is for ages 3 to 8 with performances at Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater, 10 West 64th St. at Central Park West, NYC. Tickets are \$18 (\$15 YMCA members) at Ovationtix, (866) 811-4111 or at www.newyorkchildrenstheaterfestival.org.

The 3rd Annual New York Children's Theater Festival runs April 25, 2014 to May 18 with four productions: *Rescue Rue*; *Viva Pinocho! A Mexican Pinocchio!*; *Cinderella*, *The Fairy God Mother's Tale*; and *Mythos*. The Festival provides a birthplace in New York City for new live children's entertainment from around the globe, and serves as a platform for writers and producers who are passionate about developing innovative theatrical experiences for children. **The New York Children's Theater Festival** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. More at www.newyorkchildrenstheaterfestival.org and www.facebook.com/NYCTFest.

Media contact: Rodi Rosensweig, 203/270-8929, Rodicompany@earthlink.net